IDOLS
OF
TO-DAY

W. J. N. SERVICE

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BY

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"WAR AND THE PEACE OF GOD" "REFLECTIONS OF AND ON THE '45"
ETC. ETC.

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FOREWORD

In these Sunday Evening Talks, my endeavour has been to present in a simple garb the suggestion that all the "strait and narrow" avenues of the best thought and feeling lead to the Beautiful, with its most perfect expression in the mind of Christ.

W. J. N. S.

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I

THE DOMINION OF THE SECULAR AND MATERIAL IN CERTAIN MATTERS

It has, I fancy, always been a temptation to men of thought, and perhaps more especially to men who talk, to sum up the characteristics of an age or a generation, of a community or a nation, in one word. All generalisations are proverbially false—at any rate, false in the sense of being only partially true. The ages which have been known as "The Dark Ages," were not entirely without light. There were scholars in them of no mean achievement, and Romance and Chivalry, of some kind or other, never die out in the world. It is a truism which is nearly true of the individual life, that there are redeeming features in every character, if the probing is deep enough. Yea, more than that, the tares and the wheat in the growing are so like that sometimes the seeming bad is good in disguise. Not infrequently it happens, not merely in poetic portraiture or in fiction, but in actual life, that the light which seems to lead men astray is, in the ultimate analysis, light from heaven. I remember a distinguished minister once said to me of one of his colleagues greater than he, that if he had not been a saint, so narrow was his forehead and so bristly his

hair and so heavy his jaw, " the Big Three " of Scotland Yard would have had him under constant observation.

Yet, while all this is true, there are, in all ages and generations, certain characteristics which he who runs may read, and this age in which we live is characterised as, above all things, materialistic. There is probably a good deal of sound worldly sense in the practice of the Church of Rome in not canonising her saints till they have been dead for a considerable number of years. There is much hidden from the living which becomes manifest and patent to their posterity. The verdict of history is usually about as correct as any human verdict can be. It may well enough be that the eyes of men and women who are living their lives in the world of to-day are holden, so that what they pronounce good or bad may, in the retrospect of their children or their children's children, be seen to have been misnamed. It is, again, notoriously the case that the greatest creations in literature have not been recognised by the generation to which they were given at anything like their true value. " The best sellers " to-day put their authors into a state of affluence. But *Paradise Lost* didn't bring many pounds, and the author of the " Kil-

marnock Edition " had, of course, no share in the prices which a copy of it to-day commands.

These facts have all to be weighed and considered ; and, when they are weighed and considered, wise men show their wisdom in refraining from hasty judgments and dogmatic deliverances. The work of the mere critic is seldom lasting. They who have hurled at mankind mere abuse, calling to their generation, " Ye fools ! ye scatter-brained idiots ! " have rapidly become voices crying in the wilderness. It is amazing to read that one of the loudest-mouthed of our demagogues to-day declares himself to believe in civility, but not in servility (fortunately, he has not the face to claim that he believes in humility !) In that slogan, he is nearer the truth of things than he seems to be in most things. Civility is what, in the long run, this world, often called vulgar and sordid, demands. If it is to be convicted of wrong and foolishness, it insists that this should be done in a gentlemanly way. If a mirror is to be presented to its face, it requires that some allowance should be made for defects in the glass. This is a homely way of presenting a great and eternal truth—namely, that the true benefactors of the human race, in every department of life, have always been, and must

always be, creators and not mere destroyers. It avails mankind little to draw their frailties from their dread abodes, and lay them open to the birds of prey. In theory, the task may be as Quixotic as the cynics care to represent it, but in practice, the quarrying for the gold amongst the dross of a generation or of an individual life is the only way of thinking or feeling about the world and men, which makes philosophers and, I might say, Christians.

Yet, as I have said, there are characteristics of an age and a generation which he who runs may read, certain characteristics which not only meet, but force themselves upon, the eye and the mind at every turn and corner. I suppose that the secular and the material have exercised dominion in thousands of lives in every age and generation. It may be that they seem to have a wider dominion to-day than they ever had before, simply because they are more openly practised and professed. But, be that as it may, these are days, it seems to me, when it is not merely a matter of academic interest, but one of considerable practical importance, for men and women (and, of course, especially for men and women professing to be religious) to take stock of themselves and the world in which they live as to how they stand in thought, in

feeling, and in practice toward what is called secular and material. When I use the word "secular," I do so in the ordinary, everyday acceptance of the word. I do not refer to the venerable system of philosophy called Secularism which may be described as a second-cousin of Scientific or Marxian Socialism—a cousin, by the way, at least once removed nowadays from the belief of thinking men. I remember I had my first introduction to Secularism in practice many years ago when I had occasion to visit a man in a low flat in a poor district of a great city. He expounded his philosophy with great glibness, fluency and even eloquence. He was a lecturer on the subject. And he lay in his bed the greater part of every day smoking his pipe, while his daughters, emaciated looking girls, were working—in these days from six o'clock in the morning—in a mill. He emerged three nights in the week to shed abroad the light of his darkness in certain halls frequented by those who rejoiced in his great powers of vituperation. I thought then, and I think so still after all these years, that, if our human philosophies are to be judged by their fruits, Secularism cannot be ranked high amongst the influences which make for an unselfish and noble life.

When I speak of the secular and the

material, I use the words as they are used in common parlance, the secular as opposed to the sacred, the material as opposed to the spiritual. It is unnecessary, even if it were possible, to give exact definitions of these terms; but what they denote, what they stand for, what their chief content is, every man knows. In their manifestations, they are unmistakable.

And, in approaching consideration of their manifestations in the world of to-day, one must remember that, like some of the saints, the so-called sacred and spiritual has, in certain ways, a bad record. As in the case of liberty so-called, so in the name of sacred, some of the biggest crimes in the history of the world have been committed. I fancy it is literally true that, up till ten or twelve years ago, the oldest established ecclesiastical institution was responsible for more slaughter in the ranks of humanity than any other power in the world. Probably this record has been paled into relative insignificance in Russia these last few years. We learn that the head of one of the organisations in that country was followed to his grave the other day with all forms of honour and lamentation—he who guided a policy, or what is ironically called an ideal, responsible for thousands of murders,

who, in his hours of quiet meditation, perhaps shared the dictator's historical desire that humanity had but one neck which a single blow could sever. The plaint of Macbeth seems rather feeble, almost peevish, nowadays, when, in this so-called civilised world, men rise, not with twenty mortal murders, but with thousands of them on their crowns. This is a fact to which men cannot shut their eyes; the fact that the name sacred has been applied to deeds as cruel and vindictive as have ever been done in the world. "The rose called by another name may indeed smell as sweet"; but the stern fact remains that, in the history of this world, the corruption of the best has always been the worst. And it is not merely the raking up of a murky past, to recall to mind that many things and many men called spiritual, have been merely unintelligible, empty and vain.

Bearing these things in mind—and a man cannot be fair and just in his estimate of things who does not try to face facts, the unpleasant as well as the pleasant—let us think of a few of the manifestations of secularism and materialism as we see them in the life of to-day. These manifestations are made, not merely in action which the eye can see, but also in the thought and in the feeling of the

men and women of to-day, these thoughts and feelings which lie at the root of most actions upon which judgment is pronounced. Take the well-worn—some think the threadbare—theme of Sunday observance—a theme often received in what are called "the best circles" with yawning. Yet, it would be difficult to find a better illustration of certain of the truths which I have tried to outline. In this matter, perhaps more than in most, there is a shining example of how much of what was called sacred was not in reality sacred at all. The pendulum has a way of swinging to extremes through no fault of its own but merely in fulfilment of its *raison d'être*. When the fathers have eaten sour grapes, the children's teeth are set on edge. We have indeed a heritage that is sacred and will ever be so, a heritage without which, spite of what the iconoclastic reformers declaim, we should be poor creatures. But we have also a heritage of what was temporary and, more or less, accidental, a necessity of times past, that has passed with times past. There are many men and women still living who remember what a nightmare the Lord's Day was in many a home—a day of gloom and severity; a day when few could really cherish the feelings of the Psalmist who, "joy'd when

to the House of God, Go up, they said to him"; a day when the pulpit thundered with pictures of God's wrath and judgment, and the atmosphere was charged, not so much with love and sweetness, as with sulphur; a day when the reading of a volume with any human interest in it was an offence and the blinds were drawn to shut out the light of heaven. These ideas and practices were undoubtedly to some extent the fruit of the Old Testament teachings. The prophets were men of stern righteousness and absolute fearlessness. But I allow I often feel that, with the men on whom they breathed their threats and menaces, it was not surprising that they were not particularly popular. Read their utterances; and one sighs for a word of encouragement, if not of flattery, which they might have given to their benighted generation; and, in the end, one craves for some fellowship with a Deity who is not so often in a furious rage and bent on the extermination of thousands, whose worst crime was often their childishness, ignorance and stupidity. And it has not been reserved for this enlightened age of ours to realise that death was rather too heavy a penalty to inflict upon the rascals who went a-gathering of sticks on the Sabbath Day.

In this particular matter of Sunday observance, we have not only to read and understand its history; we have also, in my opinion, to consider what is the teaching of the Church of to-day. Be it said to its credit, this is an age in which men demand what they call truth and freedom. Often, of course, what they call truth is anything but the whole truth, and what they call freedom is the grossest licence. Yet, on the whole, there is, I think, in the world of men to-day, a more widespread demand for what is in accordance with reason and the highest enlightenment than ever before; and most certainly there is a freedom in profession of belief and unbelief which would not have been tolerated even thirty or forty years ago. Is the Church meeting the thinking man's demands in these respects? I just wonder. We do not need to go far from home to find, as a dominant influence, a High Church with a ritual hardly distinguishable from that of the Church of Rome. He is merely a fanatic who so believes in the Divine right of Presbyterianism as to hold anathema everything to which John Knox did not give his express imprimatur; and no sensible man believes that all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge were with Martin Luther. But we have, in our Communion, certain things

which, it seems to me, we must, at our peril, jealously preserve, such as our simplicity of worship and our dislike of superstitious and sensuous practices. I say quite frankly that we are confronted with dangers in these matters. Our Communion tables are being styled altars. We are, as it were, plastering things with the epithet "holy" as though by this name we added to their solemnity and sanctity. We are increasingly observing what are called the "Festivals of the Church," even some of them which are purely pagan and not particularly reputable in origin. And, on the intellectual side, dogmas are still proclaimed which are merely man-made, and are really incredible by men of any enlightenment. So that there is, at any rate, something both in the history of the Church and in present ecclesiastical tendencies, which cannot be left out of account when the problem of Sunday observance is faced.

But this freedom—oh, this freedom! I have been spending many Sundays as an observer of our modern enlightenment in this matter. I do not pause to consider the historical and scriptural basis upon which Sunday observance is based; and I do not accept the airy dismissal of the clerical attitude as being one of mere prejudice, such

as men might have toward the infringement of the rules of their Trades Union. But I cannot reconcile myself to the idea that all is well with a community where no day at all is set apart for some thought of the things of God and of what is not of the market-place.

We are enamoured of the idea of health. The president of one of the greatest medical associations is reported as having enunciated one of these aphorisms which sound so wise and are, in reality, almost nonsensical. He said that, while the longer duration of human life is a credit to his profession, the members should aim not so much at prolonging human life as at making men's life healthy while it lasts. I confess I cannot see how these two aims are to be dissociated, the one from the other: for, if men's lives are kept healthy and well, there will always be the grave danger of their being longer in duration. "Mens sana in corpore sano" has been the dictum of the wise and prudent in all generations. Nowadays the "corpus" is no longer what the old ascetics termed it, "vile"—it is dwarfing into insignificance the mind and soul. We are living in an age not God-fearing, but microbe-fearing. We should think more of the myriads of friendly microbes which keep us in life in their heroic warfare. I hope to return to

this theme when I come to speak of the Dominion of Science and so-called Knowledge. Meanwhile, I cite it as an illustration of one form of the dominion of the secular and material over men's thoughts and feelings and conduct.

Remove, banish as far as you like, all superstition regarding the observance of the Lord's Day. And what I feel is this, that it is not all well for men and women when they spend their Sunday tearing over the country in their motor-cars in a thirty-five-miles-an-hour pursuit of nothing, not even a Golden Fleece; when women accounted fashionable dance till one o'clock on Sunday morning, and inspire the rustic lassies to substitute paint and powder for the bloom of ripe apple on their cheeks; when our gilded youth are more ashamed to take six to a bogey three than they are to be convicted of a sublime ignorance of William Shakespeare; and when records of continuous jazzing for forty-eight hours win high popular appreciation.

And perhaps the most vexing and alarming thing is, not that these things are, but that they pass as evidence of enlightenment, good-breeding and culture. That they are "broad-minded," is a favourite claim of these exponents of modern freedom. I forget what

Euclid's definition of breadth is, if indeed he have one. But I seem to know that real breadth of mind is not to be measured by utter disregard for the feelings of others, and by the happy-go-lucky thought that life's journey is roses, roses all the way; that 'twill be time enough to think of the things unseen when the grasp of the seen is obviously being loosened—time enough to seek for God, when we can no longer keep pace with the trippings of men and are become the palsied at the noisy banquets of a syncopated hilarity.

II

AND IN CERTAIN OTHER MATTERS

I HAVE been speaking of certain manifestations of the dominion of the secular and material in our modern life. There are other manifestations of it just as patent.

Consider the popular beliefs of to-day. There is on almost every hand belief in worldly wisdom. The generations have heard with their ears the apostolic dictum, that the wisdom of the world is foolishness with God. But, for the vast majority, this is, and probably always has been, a mere theological dogma that has no practical bearing upon human life and conduct. Indeed, the truth of the saying, to say nothing of its practicability, has been questioned by many accounting themselves acute of mind. Some of these have taken up the purely agnostic position, and maintained that no human being, even if he be an apostle, has any right to predicate anything of the thoughts and feelings of God. If God there be, is their contention, He is unknowable. They point to the statement of the Bible that His thoughts are not our thoughts and His ways are not our ways. They are believers in the worldly wisdom that consists in proving all things by a scientific

demonstration such as is demanded in the presentation of material and tangible facts. They maintain that most of our theology is mere anthropomorphism, men's making God in their own image.

Now, for many minds, this reasoning is attractive. There is but one objection to it (ironical as it seems to say so), and that is, that this attitude of so-called reasonable men is not reasonable. I suppose it has to be allowed, and, indeed, should be freely allowed, that much is to be attained in life by the exercise of worldly wisdom. And, more than that, in the religious life itself, there must be the exercise of a wisdom closely akin to what is called worldly wisdom. Without that, religious belief is apt to degenerate into a foolish fanaticism, and the religious practices of the whirling dervishes cannot well be condemned. We can go a long way, it seems to me, in this direction, not only without damaging, but to the greater glory of, religion. Right-thinking men are justified in refusing to believe of God things that are unworthy of His creatures, such as vindictiveness, unforgivingness, cruelty, hate. The Creator, whatever His attributes may be, can never be less than His creatures. That is as axiomatic as that two and two make four. In certain

quarters to-day, an effort has been made to prove the divine wisdom and beauty of Calvinism. But, it is curious to reflect, from this country, where the fruits of the " Institutes " were widespread, came something like the death-blow to the rigidities of Predestination and Election in the form of " Holy Willie's Prayer," and Michael Servetus has an upsetting way of coming out of the recesses of the memory. As a system, Calvinism is severely logical, and the creation of a master-mind. But men can no more live on systems than they can on bread alone. And, be it allowed, there is much branded as laxity of thought which is merely a revolt from pure dogmatism. I am not one of those who cry out that all is lost, that the foundations of true religion are undermined, because certain thinkers have given it to the world that the sacrificial idea of the Atonement is merely a Jewish survival and not of the essence of Christ's teaching. And in the religious sphere, perhaps more than in any other, heresy in belief has had penalties put upon it out of all proportion to its crime. The Apostle Paul described his own worship of God as in a real sense heretical, not in accordance with the worship of the fathers. The horrors of the Inquisition can never be erased from the memory of mankind. And

to this day, excommunication carries with it penalties that have nothing to do with religion. The distinction between Church and Chapel still to-day involves not merely spiritual, but social, separations. Worldly wisdom, in this connection, manifests itself unpleasingly in choosing the place of worship where the so-called "best people" sit; and even that contemptible attitude is not real wisdom, because so many of the so-called "best people" don't sit at all!

We can, and should, go a long way, I have said, in encouragement of the idea, that there is need, in the religious sphere, as in every other, for the exercise of a wisdom and a reasonableness akin to the best and fairest worldly wisdom. Nothing is really more ludicrous than to see men condemning each other to the nethermost regions in the name of the God of Love over some trifling point of ecclesiastical policy or dogma. I think it was Matthew Arnold who characterised Christianity as a creed of "sweet reasonableness." And I heard one of the cleverest ministers of our Church once remark that he did not like the type of man who found Christ and never smiled again. Earnestness and enthusiasm have their highly important, indeed their indispensable, places

in the exercise of religion. But to earnestness must be added sunshine; and the author of *Ecce Homo* is not convincing when he represents Christianity as little more than a Divine Enthusiasm.

Yet, while these things have to be granted, the fact, I think, remains that wherever the truth is, it is not with the rationalists and the materialists. He who only sees with his eyes and hears with his ears, does not see and hear by any means all that is to be seen and heard even in this world. History and experience prove that the eye and the ear are so far from being infallible guides in the discernment of truth as to be quite commonly misleading. There are, in every sphere of life, appearances which do not reveal, but conceal, the realities. And perhaps the fairest and noblest things of which men and women can have experience, admit of no proof and no analysis. Even our human loves are of that order. The rose has not all its beauty and sweetness for the botanist. True friends need no protestation of their affection, one for the other. The soul of things is never touched by the surgeon's knife. Most great things are, like the circulation of the blood, unconscious and voiceless. And there is the eternal mystery in most things that exercise the greatest influences

over men's minds and hearts, that eternal mystery which never yields its secrets to the idly curious and has no traffic with the head erect, but comes with the call to worship and bow down. So far from the ultimate truth being with the rationalists and materialists, there is a sense in which it can be said with literal truth, that they only are attaining to true knowledge who know that they do not know. One of the wisest remarks I have heard for many a day was that of a great scientist of our time who, discoursing of that ultra-mysterious thing the ether, said, "It takes courage to affirm, but it takes far more to deny." That is the spirit to which alone the really great things are revealed.

Still, this world is dominated to a great extent by belief in worldly wisdom. Hero-worship is a most excellent thing if you are sure about your heroes. Sagacity, foresight, capacity may take men to success in worldly affairs, though it is surprising to find how difficult it often is to relate worldly success to brain power or even to hard work. We have our admiration for the good business man; but if a man is merely a good business man, and devotes all his time and thought to business, he is living a dwarfed and stunted life. We need, perhaps, have no anxiety

about his fitness for heaven, but he has taken a great responsibility upon himself who passes through this world of wonders with his ledger as his Bible. There is much in life that may be attained, but there is still more that can be easily missed. Cleverness is a thing much admired; and, doubtless, cleverness has its achievements. But when men have made a name for themselves as being, above all things, clever, they are apt to become mere posers. We have some of these in the world to-day. One of them was telling an audience the other day that he had a great admiration for a certain Soviet leader. He evidently is not acquainted with a volume I read the other day by a French authoress, *My Experiences in Soviet Russia*, or he would not have had the temerity to express admiration for this particular man of all the company exercising power in that unhappy country. I have no belief in the clever men who try to convince the world that, on every subject, they are right and all the others wrong. Real cleverness should enable men, even prominent and famous men, to save themselves from talking nonsense and from the delusion that they are addressing a world sunk, in every respect, in Erebean darkness.

Here is another example of the so-called

cleverness that is to me so stupid. It is the writing of a man who is regarded as, above all things, extremely clever, a master of the paradox, and it is headed "Why I am a Catholic." "I," he writes, "who have not a drop of Irish blood, who have only been but twice in Ireland, and who have (in the graceful phrase of Buckingham) neither an Irish interest nor an Irish understanding, saw very early that the Irish question was the one thing keeping the party system alive because there was in the heart of it a religious reality, and I concentrated on that part of Liberal policy because it was real. And what I saw more and more clearly in history and experience was a Christian people, long persecuted and still hated for some inscrutable reason, till I began to think it must be simply for being the same original and irritating sort of Christians who were thrown to the lions of Nero."

Think of it—the test of the truth of a religious faith is to be by its ability to keep solid a political system, a particular party system! When the writer gauges the merit of religion by the persecutions it has endured, and refers to those who were thrown to "the lions of Nero," he is on the most unsafe possible ground. Has he forgotten what happened to the Hugenots in France? Does he know that

thirty-two thousand were massacred in the Spanish Inquisition alone? Worldly wisdom may be a good thing when it takes the form of what has been called "sanctified common sense." But it is a sham and a delusion when it is regarded as leading men anywhere near the Holy of holies, even of this world, to say nothing of converse with the stars and the saints in light.

Another belief that is still one of the idols of many in the world, is the belief in mere numbers. Carlyle may have been extreme (he often was that) on the other side when he declared that minorities were always right. Yet that idea is more in accordance with the verdict of history than the dictum that once was popular as being the quintessence of wisdom, namely, that God is on the side of the big battalions. Perhaps the agony through which the world has passed has done something to shake men's faith in the idea that, if there are millions to back a cause, it will go to victory, whether it is right or wrong. There never was a time when there was more loose talk about what is called Democracy than there is to-day. Everybody who talks, talks about what he calls Democracy. Hardly a single speech is made in public which has not a flattering reference to the will of the people.

And, spite of all the great work of education, there is still, about almost every multitude, the sheep-like disposition to follow the lead in whatever direction it goes. It saves trouble and gives a feeling of mental warmth to go with the crowd. And, as a rule, the man who is in eternal opposition to everybody but himself is keeping poor enough company. But the history of the world does not at all encourage the idea that the great reforms which have been carried through in this world have been effected by men marching in thousands with flags flying and war-songs ringing. Millions may be required to wage war of the modern kind. But at this day we have abundant occasion to know what the fruits are of even successful war. You may require thousands and thousands to secure what you call victory in your industrial contentions. And there are many still who seem to have faith in the achievements of mere force. There could be scarcely any faith less well-grounded. Perhaps, indeed probably, bishops are quite within their right to declare the Christian Ethic and the gospel of peace and goodwill to the angry disputants in the industrial world. Where these well-meaning ecclesiastics go wrong, as it seems to me, is when they pass over to the realms of

economics, to the inculcation of a science which is amongst the most inexact in the world, and to dealing with statistics which can prove anything. I seem to hear a voice say to them, as it said to the man who had a quarrel about a legacy, " Man, who made me a judge and a divider over you ? " And when a man, who once held high place in the affairs of the nation, comes to tell his audience what Christ would say regarding a particular worldly dispute were He in the world to-day, and declares that His attitude would be just much the same as his own political creed, he has, to my mind, reached a stage of vanity which is hardly distinguishable from blasphemy.

Look where you will on the page of history, you will fail to find any great and enduring achievement through mere force and numbers. There are eternal truths which come up uppermost from all the devastations of the world and the clash and wreckage of empires ; and one of these is that the only true and lasting victory is that of the spirit. Even after the lapse of a few short years, where are they who had part in the so-called victory of right over might, the millions who fought and died on the one side or the other of the titanic struggle, so far as the memory of the multitudes of

to-day is concerned? All the victories of mere force and numbers are Pyrrhic victories, so costly as to be ruinous. The men who really left the world better than they found it were the men who fought with the sword of the spirit—the spirit of love, self-sacrifice, goodwill, and faith in God. These cannot be numbered in millions. They come to you now, not with decorations on their breasts, but with crowns of thorns on their head. The multitudes did not carry them shoulder-high to the mass meetings. They pushed them out of their way as dreamers and obstructionists. Their biggest and most enthusiastic processions were when they were being hurried to their Golgothas.

You may think it is a tragic truth that still in this great world, after the ages of civilisation and progress so-called, the only way to true blessing of humanity is the way of suffering and crucifixion. But it would be a far more tragic situation if it were possible for any man to silence the voice of truth and goodness by the strength of his brawny arm in the use of the cudgel; or if it were possible for multitudes of men to crucify the teacher of the eternal truths of God, so that, when they had hammered him to death and sealed his sepulchre with great stones, there could be no

resurrection of him in the minds and hearts of the world.

This is a noisy world in which you and I are living. The fierceness of militarism has merely changed its form and direction. And distracted minds are crying out, Where is the truth? What is to be the end of it all? Merely to flee the conflict and shut the ears is never a glorious procedure. The cry is echoed and re-echoed, What are the Churches doing? Where is the guide to be found who will lead the contenders out of darkness into some light that shall be light for all? Where is the strong arm that will root out the prejudices, the hates, and the lies? And the hills look on it all with their majestic imperturbability. The dome of heaven retains the smoothness of its beautiful face. The moon is still pale, whether for weariness or bloodlessness. But there is a sunset which first impresses with the gorgeousness of its colours; and then takes on, to the contemplator, a deeper and deeper significance; and, from out of the red, there emerges the figure of the Cross which is the sure symbol, not of death, but of eternal life and hope; and, with that vision, tired eyes get peace to close themselves in velvet sleep; and wearied minds are touched to rest by something

mystic, yet more subtle and gentle than the kiss of love upon a fevered brow; and it doesn't seem to matter just so much whether the morning of this world dawn soon, or tarry long, or even, mayhap, never break at all.

III

THE REASON AND UNREASON OF FASHION

THERE is, of course, fashion in well-nigh everything under the sun, in thought, in feeling, and in practice. One system of thought quickly gives place to another. In my day at the University, a distinguished philosopher was teaching Hegelianism with its foundation of " pure being " on one side of the quadrangle, while a less distinguished philosopher, on the other side, gave full marks to students who, following his teaching, described that German system of thought as " pure nothing."

In poetry, perhaps more markedly than in any other sphere, fashion is easily traceable. What is called the Classical Period, with its stately measures, gave place to the Romantic Period, with its freer style and its wider range of subject. The Miltons and the Drydens and the Popes were superseded by the Wordsworths, the Shelleys and the Brownings. And now the Romantic Period has not proved nearly romantic or free enough. Kipling was supposed to be an advance even on Browning in the matter of giving expression to what had been regarded as prosaic and material. But most of the ultra-moderns

have far outsoared Kipling, and the disciples of him who is described as "The Grand Old Man" of modern poetry, Thomas Hardy, have left their master far behind; and have produced a literature which one would hardly have believed to be poetry but for their assurance, their insistence, upon the point. What has been called "the grotesque" in Browning, has been far out-grotesqued in the productions of the moderns. The abrupt and the formless, even the ungrammatical, appear to have a special virtue. The Muses have been brought down from Parnassus to the plain with a rush. If the demand is to be gauged by the supply, then the modern reader wants the donkey and the circus clown instead of Cupid and Chloe. And there is high appreciation, not so much of the sweepers of the Augean garages, as of the "gentlemen with dusters" wiping the floor with the reputed great, with a thoroughness greater than that of Boswell and even less kind than that of the vacuum cleaner.

Much the same story is to be told in the development of music, painting, the drama, sculpture and architecture. Music without melody, is the fashion to-day. Hymn-tunes, I read the other day in the utterance of a

lecturer, must be made more like dance-tunes. In the worship of song, he said, we really danced, following, I presume, the example of David before the ark. One wonders whether he would advise a fox-trot or a two-step for the metrical Psalms. Incidentally, these modern lecturers, these alleged experts on well-worn themes, are all bent upon saying something new, something original, something striking, and, in that endeavour, are led into extravagance and exaggeration of every kind. Summer schools are presented with dicta on most subjects under heaven—dicta which should be ashamed to appear even in winter. Each exponent of a subject must say something about it which has never been said before, and probably should never have been said at all. Musical Festival adjudicators, in some cases, seem to be out, not so much to encourage the budding musicians, as to say smart, epigrammatic things. What is known as "playing to the gallery" is not merely fashionable, in modern oratory—it is rampant; and the only method in this madness is that all the light and wisdom cannot be in the "stalls." This applies, you must have felt, even to some of the speakers at the British Association, who left on one the impression that, whatever was the truth about things, it never was what

had been popularly supposed and currently believed.

The plays of Shakespeare appeal to as small and select a circle as the Ring of Wagner. The old masters are valued as old masters largely from the commercial point of view. Impressionist schools, with their unrecognisable objects, command popular admiration. A leader of the moderns told me that the fatal objection to the Victorian poets was that they were propagandists. I wonder what he has to say about the novelists of our day who write for the furtherance of the objects of some particular organisation. That may be a paying procedure; but it surely is not art. In general, it may be said that the fashionable in poetry, in art and in music is singularly lacking in tunefulness, in restfulness and in what used to be regarded as the beautiful. In these departments there seems to be the reflection of much of our modern life—hustle, discord, noise, fury, restlessness, discontent—a preference for jerks rather than for repose. You have, on the one hand, the current belief that the eighteenth century can be summed up in the one word "conventional." The Victorian age is associated, in popular belief, with everything that is starchy, stiff, and dowdy. On the other hand, you have in Strachey's

Life of Queen Victoria pictures of great men which represent them as anything but conventional; and the late Professor W. P. Ker, in his admirable, though rather pompous, volumes of essays, maintains that the convention of the eighteenth century was a wholly sound and good convention. Everywhere the same story is told—the quick change of fashion, the constant alterations of values, the fickleness of human taste.

And touching thought which is more distinctively religious or, at any rate, ecclesiastical, the teachings of the Herbert Spencers, the Huxleys and the Darwins reacted upon the creeds of the Churches. The agnostic or even atheistic positions became fashionable. Up-to-date people felt that they had been delivered from mediæval obscurantism. What was known as the Higher Criticism was welcomed as a kind of mental emancipation. Nobody who was anybody believed any longer the Genesis story of the creation. It fell with all other miracles in the great flood. To-day one of the most popular of writers on natural subjects styles his volume, *The Gospel of Evolution*. And, side by side with all this, you have, curiously enough, two factors actively at work—the rise and spread of Spiritism, and the increasing popularity of

the sensuous worship of the Roman Catholic Church. These two influences seem, on the surface, to be in direct antagonism to the fashionable creed of agnosticism. It is little wonder that, with so many kinds of voices ringing in their ears, it is difficult, especially for young people, to know where exactly they stand, what exactly they ought to believe, where the true wisdom is to be found. And I say to them that it is only by taking these various aspects of thought as being, in essence, fashions, that they can give to them their true value, that they can save themselves from turning their backs upon the problems of life with the feeling uppermost that there is really no solution of them at all. Much of the work of the pioneers in science was necessary spade work ere a fairer and more stable structure could be erected. It is the fate of all great thinkers and writers to have imitators who out-herod Herod. The Strausses out-wagnered Wagner. There are, nowadays, a dozen theories of evolution, most of which go much further than Darwin ever went. All extremes and exaggerations are ephemeral : they are appointed limits beyond which they cannot go. The value of the book called by the name of Isaiah is not diminished materially if there were two Isaiahs or

even three or four Isaiahs. So far as I know, this Higher Criticism which was fashionable amongst those accounting themselves super-intelligent has not undermined any essential part of true religion. On the contrary, where it has been sane, just, and enlightened, it has removed much that honest men could not bring themselves to believe, and, in so doing, has emphasised the unshakable foundations of an enlightened faith.

It may sound a contradiction in terms to speak of the Dominion of Fashion. How, it may be asked, can anything which is essentially ephemeral—a thing of which the most striking feature is the rapidity with which it changes—exercise dominion over the minds and hearts of men and women? To which question, the simple answer is, It does.

The example of both the dominion and the rapidity of change in fashion which, as the saying is, hits us in the face every day is, of course, the example of the outward garbs in which men and women attire themselves. I do not presume to express even with appropriate brevity an opinion on a subject so thin and of, it seems, rapidly diminishing significance. But it is an example of how quickly the taste of one class of society in this matter is passed on to another, and comes to that other as

though it were framed in heaven! The Apostle Peter carries little weight with his saying, "Adorning, let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price."

But look at things that are not so transparent, and in these also you cannot fail to see the dominion of this ephemeral thing, fashion. Some social custom springs up, and though it may be as ridiculous a one as you can think, it takes on the form of a coercion, and a breach of it is a heinous offence, evidence of a lack of what is called culture, of what passes as good breeding. "It's not done" is the sufficient condemnation of a practice or a position. The coercion and the dominion of this that is called Society may be, from every point of view, unreasonable and unjustified; but there they are, affecting the doings and the thought of men and women. There is the time-honoured maxim, "Do in Rome as the Romans do." It has always seemed to me a feeble and unworthy precept. There is, so far as I know, nothing so impeccable and right that the Romans do as to make them

examples to be slavishly followed by those who are not Romans. They have their fashions, as we all have. But, as an example to be followed, men and women surely want something with a deeper and more lasting authority than a fashion.

And it is precisely in this coercive power of a fashion that its danger lies. It is precisely when men and women don't realise how changing and ephemeral a fashion is, that they are found missing entirely the real and deep things of life. I purposely avoid considering what moral principles are involved in this matter; I don't know what they are, or indeed if there are any at all. But what I do seem to know is this, that it is a pity if men and women go through life giving wrong values to things; exalting to a place of importance what is really of little importance, and having their eyes and their minds holden, so that they miss the things in the world that are of profound significance and perennial beauty. There are romances in life which never appear on any picture-house screen, romances wonderful and often tragic. There are, unseen by the superficial gaze, sufferings endured with a courage unrivalled on the battlefield. There are voices sounding, laden with messages far more important than the

novelist or the press present. There are beautiful souls in their quiet corners, full of glorious visions for which the multitude has no time and no ear. There are heroic hearts and patient spirits in bodies withered and twisted beyond the concealments of the sartorial artists. And I venture to say that no man can ever live as big and as expanded a life as he is capable of who has, as his chief guide, the opinion of the world, the ideas of the great multitude; the thought of those termed "the best people," if thought these have; the *comme il faut* of the "smart set," who seem to me so often far from smart.

I have said that the great danger of fashions in thinking and feeling and acting is that these are not recognised by the crowd as essentially ephemeral, and are given a dominion over the minds and hearts of men and women to which neither on the ground of reason nor of history they are entitled. That a thing is fashionable is no proof whatever that it is of the divine ordering of things. On the contrary, the page of history shows many examples of the dangers of popularity. I give you one outstanding example. When Christianity was under the persecution of the Roman Emperors, and its devotees strove to preserve their lives by worshipping in cellars and caves and sub-

terranean places, it was a vital, living thing, a thing for which men were ready to suffer and to die. It was when Christianity became popular, in the sense of being patronised by the Emperors and the great of the land, that it was in danger of becoming flabby and corrupt.

It is an ambition not confined to the young to be what is called "up-to-date." In a sense, it is an ambition as laudable as it is natural. And I am the last to say that the reproach of being "old-fashioned," commonly flung by the young at those who are no longer young, is not often amply justified. There are many severe-faced men and women going about the world who look askance on all that was not in vogue in their early days, or even in the days of their fathers and their grandfathers — men and women arrayed in habits of thought which are long pre-Victorian, and in feelings that have only the width of the crinoline ; men and women with the acid word and the withering look for what they never heard or saw when their eyes were naturally keener and their ears not turning deafish. These worshippers of the old-fashioned do harm in the world ; they are ghosts at life's banquets ; they are kill-joys, and are generally so far from restraining the

extremes in fashion as to drive to further extremities. Mrs. Grundy is nearly as offensive as Uriah Heep, and Micawber is a gentleman compared with Mr. Pecksniff. Jesus, the Sinless, who was pleased with the anointing of Mary and the touch of her hair, had a cordial dislike of the Pharisees, with their phylacteries and hand-washings and street-corner devotions. He said what we nowadays would call libellous things about them. There is a moral obligation on the part of men and women to move with the times—in outlook, in thought, and in feeling. And the effort to be "up-to-date," in these days in which we have lived and are living, with the almost terrific strides which have been made in knowledge and achievement, is an effort well worthy of the best brains and most heroic hearts. And I for one, from the hygienic and even æsthetic point of view, seem to see some good in many of the fashions of to-day which are commonly condemned. If the world has gone all wrong, that is not entirely due to outward fashions; it is due to things deeper than those which appear to the eye—to the light that is in the world being darkness, to the rotting of the foundations which alone can withstand the batterings of the rain and wind, and the continual dropping

of godlessness. There is no reason I know why he should be regarded as being more than a type of the best conventional respectability who touches the world from the security of his easy-chair demurely draped, whose thought is covered with a smoking cap, and whose fundamentals are his carpet slippers.

But we are all, young and old, far too much ruled by names, by labels put upon things which as often conceal as reveal their content. And there are no two labels more commonly attached to men and to things, without realising what their full significance is, than those, "up-to-date" and "old-fashioned." Much that is labelled "up-to-date" is in reality old-fashioned, and *vice versa*, much that is termed "old-fashioned" is that which has perennial youth. It is not "up-to-date" to be merely flippant and cynical, because, whatever life holds to-day, it has small place for the mere cynics; small place for those who have no sense of the wonder of things, of things accounted good and things accounted bad. It is to be "old-fashioned" to think and to speak as though the wheat was all tares, and the good of everything was just about nothing. It is not to be "up-to-date," but to be "old-fashioned," to suppose that, given plenty of money and

fine clothes, happiness is secured. It is not to be "up-to-date," it is to be "old-fashioned," to imagine that, by any artifice, you can stay the furrowings of time's ploughshare, or that, by any stimulant, you can repair a ruined palate or a broken heart. On the other hand, it is not old-fashioned—it is the verdict if not given by, then torn from, the world of to-day, as it has been given by or torn from the generations and ages that are past—that no life can be a life worth the name which does not have in it a love which passes far beyond self, and makes selfishness more difficult than sacrifice. The safe rule in judging as to what is "up-to-date" and what is "old-fashioned" is suggested in the saying of Christ, that the Kingdom of Heaven is like to the scribe taking out of his treasures things new and old, things ever new and ever old—all that the word Love stands for in the affections of men, and as the name of the Eternal and Unchangeable.

But, it may be urged, must not there be a standard in a matter of this kind? Surely the individual taste cannot be the determining authority in the matter of fashions, whether they are good or bad. No, of course, the individual taste cannot be the standard. What then is the truth by which we may here

weigh, judge, and act? That old Pharisee, Gamaliel, was near the ultimate truth when he said, "If this counsel or work be of men, it will come to nought: but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found fighting against God." And I know of no test so searching or so good and so practical as that given long, long ago, "By their fruits ye shall know them." Fashions in thought, feeling and practice may take on an appearance of freedom and wisdom, enlightenment and permanence, which deceives men and women: they may glister so that they seem all gold. But they do not stand the acid test of time; and, in the long run, leave the wearers shivering in cold and empty halls. The thistles will not produce the figs at the harvesting; and the harvesting goes on all the time, though the reapers know it not. I have never known an atheist who was a beautiful character. I have never known a miser with whom I'd care to spend an evening. I've never known a thoroughly selfish man, who really enjoyed (in the best sense of the word) life. The inner thoughts and feelings of men and women have a way of marking themselves upon their faces and uttering in their eyes; and it doesn't then matter much what they say with their lips or in what garments they

are attired. I've known unhappy men who did not cast a shadow on their fellows, yea, who had even the reputation of being merry fellows, full of fun, with never a tear in their voice, far less in their eye. I've known men to whom the world has seemed not only generous, but lavish, with its gifts, who would give all they had for the sight of a face beloved, and believed they would gain far more than they had lost ; just as I've known men to whom Nature has been niggardly and the world hard and mean, who yet had no envy in their hearts and no thought, far less word, of complaint, who made castles out of their little chambers, and filled sunshine into their pockets from their bare boards. I've known men with burning secrets tearing their hearts, being eaten away by some terrific affection, who went about as rather shallow creatures with an empty laugh—superficial men who lived a kind of butterfly-life amongst the days and hours. I've known all these, and, having known them, I think I have the open mind to which the things called " up-to-date " and " old-fashioned " have only at most a relative value. I've known all these, and, having known them, I'm unafraid of fashions which come and go. Yes, and more than that, it seems to me that amidst all the

changes, through the eternal flux, there is still the fulfilling the prophecy, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away."

The heaven of man's pleasures and gaieties and frivolities passes away, as does the earth of their competings and commercialisms and outward adornings; but through all the changes in opinions, through the rise and the fall of all popularities, after the processions of the fashions are passed, when the fierce lights of truth and the dull shadows of solitude come into being, what seems to matter most of all for men and women is whether they have had any acquaintance, in their lives, with the precepts of the Sermon on the Mount, and have had some walk with the Spirit of Him who was crucified, yet speaketh to all who have ears to hear, and has the decorations on His hands which the Roman soldiery put there with their nails, with sparkling jewels on His crown made by God's sunshine of love upon His thorns.

IV

THE CLUTCH OF MONEY

THERE is, perhaps, no subject upon which there is so much unphilosophical and even nonsensical speech and attitude as there is on the question of money. That is curious, because, in the estimate of most men, those who have it and those who have it not, it is a delicate question. Modern literature is full of what I should have thought a much more delicate question, a question upon which every novelist thinks it necessary, through his characters, to give his views, and no melodrama would be tolerated on the screens which did not, at any rate, suggest it. I do not try to estimate the amount of good or of harm this nauseating presentation of the problem does. I merely say that for myself, I adhere to the position once pithily put to me by a friend whose caustic wit and brilliant speech I miss upon the hum-drum path. He was in many ways a remarkable man, a scholar and a linguist of great attainment, a cynic, having a great and a tender heart underneath an extremely plain, indeed ugly, exterior. His zeal for purity of English killed his passion for an early love on account of the misspellings and bad grammar of her letters to

him. What irony there was in the fact that he lay dying with this notice posted on his door: "Please do not wring the bell." 'Twould have given him an attack of angina pectoris had he not already been in the agony of its clutch. And I remembered his saying, "I think if I were very ill, I should wish the prayers, not of the Church, but of my young girl friends." He said, regarding the matter on which I am touching, "What the world in its wisdom or folly calls the indelicate, must be, whatever it is to that much forgiven man, the artist in paint or marble, carefully and skilfully draped before it can be attractive to a man with any pretensions to being a gentleman." But while there is this—shall I say? —indelicate treatment of a subject that used to be considered delicate, money is a matter which speakers and writers must approach with care and circumspection; and that simple and patent fact itself shows that there is always danger in the possession and in the lack of money. When you get near men's pockets, whether they are full or empty, you get near their hearts; and that, of itself, is a fact upon which, from the standpoint of the Idealists, humanity should not pride itself. Rich men are resentful of any suggestion either that there is ground for supposing that

they should be less rich or that they do not hold their possessions by the divine right of their own brain power. And, as surely, poor men are as persistent in claiming that a world is all wrong which has them with no bank account. And so the warfare of thought and words goes on not without much bitterness. There is a well-known saying, "It is easy to see what God thinks of money by the people to whom He gives it." But that position is rather cheap, and is too cynical to take one far in dealing with this problem. And, in addition to this delicacy of the problem, when it is approached in the thought and the utterance of ordinary men, there is the peculiar difficulty in determining how far the question of religion and even of ethics enters in. No doubt, no small part of a true religion consists in bridging the wide abyss which, in ordinary thought, separates the sacred and the secular, in making the human divine and the worldly spiritual. But there is a difference between these things, and the worldly wise are commonly resentful of the intrusion, as they call it, of religion into their domain of economics and finance. And a long, and I think I may claim a wide, experience constrains me to believe that the eternal function of the Church is to preach and teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is

difficult to determine what essentially moral questions are involved in the fact, upon which I think all fair-minded and right-feeling men and women are agreed, that the wealth of the world is not at all evenly, or perhaps even justly, divided; that nearly all the luxuries of life are in the hands of comparatively few. We have, of course, apostolic authority for saying and believing that the love of money is the root of all evil. A man cannot be even using his eyes who does not see that the love of it is at the root of much evil in the world. But then this love, like other loves, exists in both the rich and the poor. In neither case is it a pure and unselfish love. And I think the world is, on the whole, tired of the so-called visionaries who do not indeed live on bread alone, but are commonly found living on other people's bread. In spite of the great success and tremendous beneficence of such Homes as those named after Quarrier and Barnardo, where what has been called "the mighty engine of prayer" is relied upon to maintain the needs, there is abroad in the world of to-day a suspicion of the saying, "The Lord will provide," so many being about who make this faith, if such it can be called, an excuse for laziness and slacking. I make bold to confess—perhaps I should do

it in confession of my sins—that saving has had small part in my life. And on that account, no doubt, I have never been able to get up enthusiasm for those belauded schemes which have as their *raison d'être* all that centres round the word "save." We have the word, or had it in our religious talk, where it meant salvation from the wrath to come and from a fire that was not quenched. This is, I think, a menace long removed from the hearts and minds of thinking men. The need of salvation most surely remains—from the furnace of selfishness and greed and worldliness. Thrift may be an idol, but it is a clay-footed idol. If there is husbandry in heaven, it certainly was not discernible in the love and goodness of heaven's greatest emissary, Jesus Christ. One gets extremely tired of the slogan "Economy with efficiency"; it may do well enough at an election time for catching a few votes, but it does not catch the human heart and expand it in any great emotion. And I never can forget that it was Judas Iscariot who protested against the divine extravagance of the precious content of the alabaster box.

But spite of what I have just been saying, the world, I think, is upon the whole justified in its weariness and impatience of those who,

professing to bear a part of the burden of St. Christopher, become a burden on the rates, just as some of us are, we think, justified in holding that a man's religion cannot be of a real and deep kind when it costs him only a penny a Sunday. I do not believe that a full expression of men's feelings and thoughts can ever be made in pounds, shillings, and pence. On the contrary, the majority of the most precious things, such as the sunshine of heaven and the truths of God, are bought "without money and without price." Yet there is, as a rule, some relation in the estimate of men, between the value they put upon anything and the price which they pay for it; and what is cheap is commonly regarded as comparatively valueless. I share with the stoutest Protestant in the valiant defence of his faith. Yet there is no getting away from the fact that the Church of Rome, spite of its monastic orders with their vow of poverty and its mendicant friars, is one of the richest institutions in the world (their possessions in Belgium are valued at millions of pounds), and that even as we know its devotees in our corners, they resemble the poor widow commended by Jesus in the synagogue offering. Their faith means something to them. In contrast, we in our protestations of freedom

are confronted with Christian Churches where there appears no call for sacrifice, none of the Christlikeness which consists in recognising that virtue is gone out of us, with the situation that in many cases the ambassadors of Christ, having no manna distilling upon them, not to mention fleshpots, are often in the doubly criminal condition of being without visible or invisible means of support.

Now, having said that, let me pass to points of profounder significance, and consider aspects of the power of money for good and for ill. It is almost impossible to exaggerate its purchasing power. It is one of the greatest tyrannies in the world ; and it has been well said that its power is realised when it is seen what men and women will do to get it. There is often not a little hypocrisy and green-eyed envy in the cry, "Go to, ye rich men, howl aloud!" Why should they howl aloud? 'Twould do them no good and would be offensive to others ; and, after all, the disability of the camel to get through the needle's eye is one for which Nature, and not the camel, is responsible. It may be difficult for rich men to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but that is not the ordaining of a grudging or jealous Deity ; it is simply that rich men, like other men, frequently fail in

their responsibilities, opportunities, and privileges. To take the utterances of Christ on this point literally, and proceed to form a cult upon their basis, is to make a dogma of universal application out of a simple statement of fact. Tolstoy preached a doctrine of Nihilism from the text, "Resist not evil." There is, from what I conceive to be the Christian point of view, no more call for rich men to cast their money into the sea as something in itself evil and worthless than there was for the early ascetics and troglodites to starve and lacerate their bodies. Impecuniosity is in itself a no more certain access to the fellowship of Christ than the hair shirt and the rude tub and speech of Diogenes. What counts from the Christian point of view is the use that men make of their money and their bodies. And it is in that matter that rich men, like other frail members of this human family, commonly enough fail. Money frequently destroys that without which entrance to any spiritual or even natural kingdom is impossible, namely, humility of heart. It often makes men vain and truculent in spirit. It commonly enough gives them an entirely distorted view of the real value of things, and fosters in them the conceit that there is really nothing in the world worth having which they cannot buy,

and the ugly thought that every man has his price. And even for that they are not themselves wholly to blame ; for there are always cringers round them who defer to them in all things, and who accept their utterances, even on subjects they know nothing about, as oracular and heaven-inspired. A peerage conferred upon a man is accepted as giving him authority to speak upon topics on which others, who have made them the study of a lifetime, are modestly silent. Even in this so-called democratic age a knighthood bestowed upon a vulgar man tempts him to rush in where angels fear to tread, amidst the problems of time and eternity. And there are cases—many perhaps—where toleration is freely given to what would not be tolerated in those who are in rags and tatters.

On the other hand, I speak from my own professional experience when I say, that there are many rich men who have genuine joy in doing the big and generous thing. There is much envy of riches (I have it for one) which is admirable, the envy of their power to give the helping hand, and to lift a man from misery to comfort of mind and to life. Often what is regarded as meanness and greed and indifference is merely the fruit of ignorance and want of realisation. These things may indeed be

culpable, but they are by no means confined to those who are blinded by riches. They are to be found even in those making the loudest protestations of the purity of their Christian faith. And often those who are vigorous denouncers of the selfishness of the rich are ignorant of how much is done by those with the worldly goods in secret ways, in ways that would not be good if they were not secret. Pricking beneath the skin does not by any means always reveal bloodlessness and callousness. There is a popular saying, "It is easy to be virtuous on a thousand pounds a year." This is just exactly the reverse of the actual truth. It is often more difficult to be virtuous, in the sense of unselfish, humble and Christlike, on a thousand pounds a year than it is on a hundred and fifty.

Yet there is another side to the picture. There is, first of all, the fact that there is commonly no discernible cause-and-effect relation between merit and worldly possession. There are prosperous men going about the world who boast that they are self-made men, and often in that protestation, as has been wittily said, they relieve Providence of a serious responsibility. There are not a few holding their light heads high who have what they possess merely by the accident of their

birth, and have no resemblance to the graceful, beautiful, eloquent lily except in respect that they toil not, neither do they spin. Perhaps the picture of Douglas Jerrold—that prince of jesters, who yet was a fierce advocate of the downtrodden and oppressed—(so near is laughter to tears, and fun to fury, and the sublime to the ridiculous, that Stephen Leacock, the inexhaustible bubbler of mirth, is a professor of economics, and Tom Hood, the inveterate punster, wrote *The Bridge of Sighs*)—perhaps Jerrold's picture is overdrawn, when he tells of the miser who so gloated over his coins that when at table he, to the consternation of those present, pushed a fork right through his hand without drawing a drop of blood and eventually, turned into a pound note, was lit by a match and vanished into a puff of smoke. But I have known, in the course of my professional life, some cases where the want of money has taken men and women to almost incredible degradation. One in particular, one of the saddest with which I have dealt, comes often back to my mind. A girl of eighteen was arrested by the police for an offence which was not only within the knowledge of her own mother, but, incredible as it seems, was carried on with her mother's active co-operation. When she was

put on trial, I asked the magistrate to give her over to my care before sentence was passed. She had a bad cough, was very deaf and emaciated. With difficulty I persuaded her to go into hospital. Within a week, helped by the kindliest of nursing, she was almost unrecognisable. The scars on her face, which she had got in her terrible warfare of life, disappeared. She was as different in appearance as (I often noticed, as a hospital chaplain) the wounded soldiers were when they were underneath the white sheets, from what they were huddled together in their hospital trains, arriving in the eerie, early morning hours, with the mud of the trenches still thick on their uniforms, and gore still oozing from their bandages. I went to see her twice a day during that period. No mention, no hint even, was ever made by anybody of the life she had been leading, and I hoped that, more quickly than I had expected, she was not only contented but pleased to make a new start. I was planning to get work for her away from the surroundings in which she had been living. But at the end of the week, she disappeared, and I have never seen her since. Why did she vanish? Not because she had been transplanted into an atmosphere too prosaic and Pharisaic for her endurance. Happiness and

joy of every sort she must have left far behind her in her short span of years. No, but, I was, and am convinced, for money, just for money ; and her case makes me peculiarly appreciative of a great writing of Thomas de Quincey. He is speaking of his Ann of Oxford Street, and, in these great words, he tries to pluck her from his memory, " During some years, I hoped that she did live, and I suppose that, in the literal and unrhetorical use of the word myriad, I must, on my different visits to London, have looked into many myriads of female faces, in the hope of meeting Ann. I should know her again amongst a thousand, and if seen but for a moment. I sought her, I have said, in hope. So it was for years ; but now I should fear to see her, and her cough which grieved me when I parted from her, is now my consolation. Now I wish to see her no longer, but think of her more gladly as one long since laid in the grave—in the grave, I would hope, of a Magdalen, taken away before injuries and cruelty had blotted out and transfigured her ingenuous nature, or the brutalities of ruffians had completed the ruin they had begun." These and similar cases cause one to hear again the cry, " O God, that bread should be so dear and flesh and blood so cheap," and show how often men and women

play with fire, and toy with high explosives ; and give me, at any rate, a hearty detestation of a matter that is sometimes regarded as a jest, and sometimes as evidence of a commendable prudence—a mother's determining a suitor's suitability for her daughter's hand by reference to his bank account. This is a trafficking in body and soul, which is, in my view, as gross as anything in the gospel of Eugenics.

I have said that there is commonly no discernible, no cause-and-effect, relation between merit and worldly possession. It is sometimes difficult to see how some of the so-called Captains of Industry ever rose even to the rank of Second Lieutenant. And I think one might assert it as a part of the Christian Ethic, that those possessions which are not the fruit of honesty, uprightness, decency are not to be admired. And, more than that, the so-called law that to him that hath shall be added, and from him that hath not shall be taken away that which he has, may work with justice in the spiritual sphere, but has nothing divine or even just about it in the commercial and industrial sphere. That money gets money may be a mundane economic fact, but it surely cannot be of the divine ordering of things. And as to those

with the full, sealed pockets who have the affected whimper about the burden of riches, it might conceivably be a Christian duty to share the burden with them, and to relieve them of some of its weight. And I allow that I am wearied, yea, rather bored stiff, by the equivocations of the great combines and monopolies which will not take a penny off the price of my cigarettes because of their loving consideration of the small retailer; by the oratory of the vehement Socialist, who is himself a rich capitalist, and attacks the ramparts of the vested interests with his six-cylindered car; and by the reasoned, unreasonable philosophising of the middleman who mulcts me in three or four pounds for what is delivered at the pit-head, for a third or fourth of that sum on the preposterous pretension that the middlemen must live; by the plaint of the brewers and distillers, who, though not in the spirit on the Lord's Day alone, are merely eking out a precarious livelihood on the paltry pennies left to them after payment of the iniquitous excise duty; and by the self-commiserations of the poor shipowners who have to content themselves with their miserable fifty thousand War Loan at five per cent. which they hold, not because their ship came in, but because it went down.

And look at the deliverance of history. Think of those whose names are writ large and gloriously upon its pages. There you read of the great inventors who were handicapped at well-nigh every point by lack of money. Think of the great poets, the great artists, the great musicians; and, with very few exceptions, you find them pinched for money, sometimes starving, not knowing where their next meal was to come from. Have vision of Sir Walter Scott at his desk in the early hours of the morning, paying his debts with things far more precious than the gold which his creditors required. Hear the cry, it was about the last he uttered before the worms began their work upon his wonderful eyes and head, of Robert Burns, "For God's sake, lend me £5!" Think of the creation of Oliver Goldsmith (among the most lovable, with Charles Lamb, of literary figures), "the village schoolmaster of whom the wonder was that one small head could carry all he knew, passing rich on £40 a year." Read the terrific writing of Cunningham-Grahame in his little volume called *Success*, and hear what he has to say on the subject of worldly prosperity, on the magnificent failures of the really great, of the stodginess of the Georges compared with romance of the Stuarts, of the vulgarity of

what is called success. It may, of course, be that success, as the world counts success, would have spoiled the genius of these great ones; there are instances where a small fortune has manifestly killed a man's Muse. It may be that some part of their achievement was produced by their struggle with the world. But there the galaxy is, staring you in the face, clad not in purple and fine linen, but struggling to keep body and soul together, and commonly giving out of their lean stores to others even less favoured than themselves. And these men teach us—not indeed that poverty and hardness of struggle can of themselves produce genius, and are essential parts of the discipline which makes for greatness—but that it is possible to make a lot of the world and life without much money, and even with a back bent with worry and care.

And one does not even need to go to the great and illustrious to learn that lesson. At our doors there are men and women whose pounds are few, but whose charity is great; men and women who are poor but, like the apostles, make many rich; men and women twisted with the ills to which mortal flesh is heir, who yet are happy and cheerful, and covered with the smile of benevolence. There

are angels in gingham aprons, and beauties, without the aid of cosmetics, in overalls. And from them we know or ought to know, and should realise without any complaint, that there are things which money cannot ever buy—the love of a true woman's heart, a balsam for those wounded in their deepest affections, a passport to the fellowship of the greatest things and the best things even in this world, an exorcism for the demons of jealousy, envy and greed. We should be foolish if we tried to minimise the hardness of the struggle with the world which has to be waged by many. A distinguished medical man connected with the Board of Health, who knows more about hospitals and slums than most men, agreed with me the other evening when I said that, in my opinion, the only objection to the comfortable philosophy that, in the matter of sickness and suffering, the poor had the same advantages as the rich, was that it wasn't true and in accordance with fact. But the more fully one realises the hardness of the fight, the more does one admire the victors in it. The more one realises the heaviness of the bludgeonings upon a man, the more glorious, yes, the more Christlike, he is when his head is 'bloody but unbowed.'

And there towers a figure above all the other

great figures of history, One who said of Himself, " Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests ; but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head." Of course, it is easy to maintain that His example and attitude toward worldly possession are hardly applicable in a world so vastly different from that in which He lived. But thoughtful minds and feeling hearts cannot get away from " this strange man upon His cross." And if, for the world of to-day, He has no other message, He certainly has this, that the rewards of heaven are not made in material, tangible things, and that it is the literal and exact truth, known in the long run both to rich and poor, that a man's life, which can be called life, does not consist in the abundance of his possessions. It is a criticism of the great drama of Job, that it ends in something that is nearly anticlimax. It is recorded, " The Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning ; for he had fourteen thousand sheep and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she asses." It is held that the Lord does not reward a suffering well endured and an agony heroically conquered, in live stock. But, be that as it may, the reward of heaven in the case of Christ was crucifixion. He was not fanatical in His

attitude toward worldly possession. True, He whipped the money changers and the sellers of doves out of the Temple. What else would any right-thinking man have done? His love, in the estimate of many heavily burdened to-day, is not so remarkable in that it extended to sinners, as in that it embraced publicans and tax-gatherers. When the rich young ruler came to Him with his great interrogation, He did not "lecture" him or receive him from the snow-clad, frigid altitude of a conscious superior righteousness. He loved him. The young man went from Him sorrowful, for he was not ready for the sacrifice of his great possessions. Did he come back again later on to his Divine Lover? Perhaps not in this world, though it has been suggested that the young man who lost his linen garment in the Crucifixion crush was no other than the rich young ruler. But it matters little. If he never had speech again with Jesus in the world, I feel sure—because vision once seen has a way of haunting when it is disobeyed, and returning to hungry eyes and disillusioned hearts like the moth to the flame—he would have converse with Him in that far greater and fairer silent world of thought and feeling, in which men weigh up their lives and, in quietness, realise what are

the things that really matter—that world where, for the young man grown older, the sheep and lands would be seen in their proper perspective; and, I fancy, he would, if not with his lips, then in his heart, not bombastically like a Roman Emperor, but quietly, humbly, gratefully and reverently, make confession, "Thou hast conquered, O Galilean." And it requires no profound reflection on the part of business men who are business-like, and of practical men who are really practical, to realise that no computation in the currency of the world is possible of what has been given to humanity, both in the way of the highest economy and the truest wisdom, in the infinite love, goodness and comfort of the penniless Prophet of Nazareth.

V

THE LIGHT AND THE DARKNESS OF SCIENCE AND KNOWLEDGE

ONLY with uncovered head can any man ponder the story of the Scientists. There have been among them a number who were boastful, vain, and full of swagger, a number who have not been true to their own humble scientific spirit, and made claims which they could not substantiate. But there have been the extravagant and the boastful in every department of life and thought—the seekers after "the shows." There were times when science and religion were represented as at deadly enmity. There have always been in the world the two classes—those who fall in love with what is new and strange at first sight, sometimes ending in the disillusionment which these first-sight loves commonly enough have, and those who are afraid to give the hospitality of their minds and hearts to strangers, in whatever form they come. Of the two, probably the attitude of the latter is the less wise and profitable. The attitude of suspicion never accomplishes anything great; it is usually the attitude of the slothful, of those comfortable in their mind's old clothes. It is the attitude of conservatism; and, whatever achievements that attitude has had in the

political world, it has few to its credit in any other department of life and thought. It is, of course, a natural attitude for men to adopt. Tradition exercises a powerful sway over the vast majority of human hearts and heads; and what men have learned at their mother's knee has an intrinsic sanctity for them. And who would try to alter that fact? Who would try to noise abroad the partialities and unreasonableness and even injustices which not infrequently characterise a mother's love? Or who would botanise upon her grave? As surely as a father transmits the features of his face to his son, so surely does he start him early in his life with what are called biases and prejudices. The law of Heredity, if law it be, is one of the most tyrannical in the world, both for good and for ill, appearing sometimes as a great and gracious benefactor, and sometimes as the embodiment of injustice, craftiness, and inexorable vengeance. Perhaps the majority of men do not "dig themselves in" in their opinions, beliefs and outlook; their trenches are made for them by many instruments, visible and invisible, long before they are of military age. On the other hand, even with sudden and fierce loves, it is generally agreed that the pronouncement, "that it is better to have loved and lost than never to have loved

at all," is not a mere poetic rhapsody, but sound, practical common sense. It is, in the actual conduct of life, better " to trust all and be deceived " than it is to view men and women with the penetrating eye of the detective, and the world as nothing more than " a fortuitous concourse of atoms." In the history of the relations between science and religion, the operation of these two attitudes is patent—the attitude of the Areopagus, where they sat who were worshippers of the new, and the attitude of the cloister, where tradition holds sway and all that would intrude upon its ramparted isolation, with the strange and unfamiliar, is treated as the Jews used to treat their lepers. The result has been that in almost no recorded story of thought, feeling and speech has there been such acidity and vituperation as there has been here, such intolerance as is unworthy both of science and of religion. The cleavage is not, I think, nearly so sharp nowadays ; the abyss has been largely filled in with the bodies of dead thought and unsubstantial claims.

And, as I said at the beginning, only with uncovered head can a man, with any wonder or reverence in his soul, approach the story of the scientists. Read the Life of Jean Henri Fabre, and you cannot but have that amaze-

ment in which worship often grows, when you know his tender love of his insects and his almost superhuman patience in the observation of them. That the marvellous disclosures of the microscope and the telescope have already laid hold upon the imaginations, and even the affections, of the minds and hearts of the multitudes, is shown by the popularity of the " Outlines " of the sciences which present them in a romantic form. Facts may be facts, yea, if one may say so, may be more real and established facts, when they are related in a readable and romantic way. And facts are commonly more amazing than fiction. The latter is the creation, often a feeble enough creation, of the human mind ; the former are much nearer what we call the creations of God, which are unexhausted and inexhaustible, leading from one chamber of wonders to another, ampler and more wonderful.

And this more should never be forgotten, that the story of the scientists is full of the record, not only of astounding patience, but also of a profound humility of mind which makes those who have it not far from the Kingdom of God—yea, of a courage and a self-sacrifice that have a parallel only in the story of Christ. Think of the hands amputated for

the malignant disease produced by the use of radium, leading to a lingering death. They who have given their lives in pursuit of a knowledge which would help and heal humanity have been by no means few, and have passed, not to their account, but, we cannot but believe, to their reward, with the flags of their integrity and undiminished courage still proudly flying. Browning's "Grammarian's Funeral" is no exaggerated picture, and is one of the finest presentations of a vastly important truth—the power of the soul to triumph over the dreariest and most "dry-as-dust" environment. Science has not been contented to show the descent of man—it has strikingly revealed his ascent. If it has laid emphasis upon the lowliness of his origin, it has extended, rather than curtailed, his destiny. No ape theory has blinded the eye of the true scientist to the image of God in the face of man. And I think that to-day with the best scientific brains, the most eager and agitating question regarding man is not the rather threadbare, tiresome and stultifying one, Whence has he come? but these others which lead to light that is light and to endeavour that is heroic and aspiring—Who is he? and Whither is he going? The question, Who made thee? may lead one to a better

understanding of the lamb or "the tiger burning bright." But it is not time well spent to keep bemoaning and weighing our dust when we could be chanting the immortality of our souls and trying the flight of our spirit. And one does not require to look for the beneficence of science in a remote past or in the affairs of the cosmos—it is manifest daily in the achievements of medical science. No cheap gibe that doctors are generally engaged in pouring physic into a body unknown, weighs much in the estimate of those who are sick, any more than metaphysic is put out of existence by the description of it as "the looking for a black hat in a dark room which is not there." There are, perhaps, few directions in which mankind has more reason to cherish deep gratitude than it has toward these patient researchers who are, generally with much self-sacrifice, endeavouring to find cures for the ills to which human flesh is heir. They are not deterred in their endeavours by the word "incurable," and do not allow their spirit to be broken by the word "impossible." These seekers and experimenters go on striving to take, not heaven, but the antithesis of it, by assault, fearless, undaunted, and oft defeated. They, at any rate, are not of the company who brand what-

ever is not of their knowledge as quackery, have little place in their practice for the power of faith, regard everything as fraud which is not recognised in the trades unionism of their pharmaceutics, and would stop the pilgrimages to Lourdes as doing little else but spread disease through overcrowding.

And to pass to more general considerations, I do not think that modern science generally encourages the view of Nature as being, essentially and above all, " red in tooth and claw with ravine " and " so careful of the type, so careless of the single life." On the contrary, it seems to me, modern Science presents Nature to us as, essentially and above all, benevolent, healing and kind. If we are " to foot it out " with any feeling of comfort and security and not hirple along as mental hypochondriacs, our vision must be, not of the rascally microbes and bacilli and corpuscles that are always lurking like thieves within us, but of the myriads of " very gallant gentlemen " who police them in their proper place of servility, and rush to wage fierce warfare upon them if they try to get the mastery.

If, then, these things are so, what is the proper attitude of mind and heart toward the sciences ? The common question, Do they do us any good ? presupposes that there is some

unanimity of opinion as to what " good " is. And there is no such unanimity in the ranks of humanity. Indeed, there is still popular suspicion of the things that " do us good " as being essentially distasteful, like the drugs of the old physicians which were accounted efficacious in proportion to their abominableness of taste. If " doing of good " consists in making men more unselfish and more Christlike, science, I don't think, can be regarded as the most potent of forces or the most persuasive of influences. I don't feel what spirituality I have become more attenuated, that Laplace's theory is to me nothing more than a " Nebular Hypothesis " ; and I confess it gives me no profound mental worry that the light from Jupiter which left there hundreds of years, travelling at an incredible speed, is so unintelligibly delayed in reaching this earth. On the contrary, one feels that, walking even in the confines of the trivial little solar system, the ordinary mind is up against the incomprehensible. And there is a real sense in which the incomprehensible is kind and peace-giving. It delivers one from the folly of thinking there is no greater mind in the universe than the finite mind of man, and makes one sink into the repose of faith and trust with thankfulness and humility of

heart. The immensities of the firmament do not call us to measure our little selves with them in the spirit of Babel, but to say with the Psalmist, " These things are too high for us, we will go into the House of the Lord," and leave us at last in the supplication—

> " A little onward lend thy guiding hand
> To these dark steps, a little further on."

I know, I am forced to know, that I count for just nothing—not even for the atom with its terrific possibilities—on the " Milky Way," but my thought and feeling are given some little proud conceit by Coventry Patmore, who may not rank amongst the brightest stars of the poetical firmament, but has something of the simplicity of genius in his " Toys." His little motherless son, having seven times disobeyed him, is dismissed to bed " with hard words and unkissed."

" Then, fearing lest his grief should hinder sleep,
I visited his bed,
But found him slumbering deep,
With darken'd eyelids, and their lashes yet
From his late sobbing wet.
And I, with moan,
Kissing away his tears, left others of my own ;
For, on a table drawn beside his head,
He had put, within his reach,
A box of counters and a red-vein'd stone,
A piece of glass abraded by the beach,

And six or seven shells,
A bottle with bluebells
And two French copper coins, ranged there with careful art,
To comfort his sad heart.

So when that night I pray'd
To God, I wept, and said,
Ah, when at last we lie with tranced breath,
Not vexing Thee in death,
And Thou rememberest of what toys
We made our joys,
How weakly understood
Thy great commanded good,
Then, fatherly not less
Than I whom Thou hast moulded from the clay,
Thou'lt leave Thy wrath, and say,
'I will be sorry for their childishness.'"

I know, I am forced to know, that whether A. R. Wallace was right or wrong about the inhabitants of Mars, I can have no walk and conversation with them. But I used to feel that there was some strength and even beauty in weakness when my dog laid his tufty, mischievous head upon my giant knee in the perfect confidence that, however often he had challenged me and vexed me through the day, he had so protected me with open eye from dangers mostly of his own imagination that I could never be guilty of basely deserting him when the persuasive, the irresistible, eloquence of his tail was still.

What, then, is the attitude of mind and heart which we should have toward the deliverances of the Sciences? Not one merely of respect, for respect is too near, in the manners of to-day, to the deference of the dependent menial. Well then, the attitude of wonder, amazement and expectancy? The open mind is not by any means always the vacant mind, and hospitality of heart does not manifest itself exclusively in oysters and champagne. The fancies and extravagances of Jules Verne are the bald facts of to-day, and wonder and yearning take to "the castles in the air," peopled with "the unsubstantial faery things"; and these are, nowadays, about the only "castles" worth having. Science teaches us, in one sense, to be amazed at everything, and, in another sense, to be amazed at nothing. It teaches us to cherish the spirit of expectancy and of preparedness for what may come to us from above or from below or from within. And, upon the whole, it is better for men to watch for the coming of television than for the ghosts and bogeys and horrific things with which their imaginations often people their onward way. Though, humanly speaking, I shall never go the trip to the moon, the journey would be a great achievement, and would demonstrate that

almost incredible things do not exist only in the lunatics, for whose mental disorder this same moon used to be held responsible.

And surprise and wonder had their place in the mind of Jesus. He voiced them in the face both of what was great and good in His experience of men, and of what was poor and mean and foolish in that experience. And that docility is an essential part of the Christian spirit, is beyond dispute.

But it may be asked, when we contemplate civilisation and progress, has not science been, of all the forces at work, the greatest pioneer and the mightiest factor ? Buckle says, No. So does Benjamin Kidd, who in his volume, *Social Evolution*, traces progress to the forces of religion, and in his later book, *The Secret of Power*, contends that progress is to be carried on by the power of woman. That science has added enormously, probably more than anything else, to the safety and comfort of life, there can be no doubt. But, if it goes on in these directions, life will be in grave danger of becoming a mere mechanism, so that, at the pressing of a button, all that we need for our mental and physical desires will be put to our hands. Already there are in operation machines which do what used to be regarded as purely mental processes. It will not be

well for men when initiative of mind and effort has been made unnecessary, and when the individual life has become but a very small part of the great bundle. Indeed, there are, even now, many who are gravely alarmed by trouble-saving machines for the mind and for the body, and who cannot forget that the genius of science was, not so long ago, devoted to the making of the most dreadful instruments for slaughter and death. These feel and, I think rightly feel, that they who speak glibly of the next war, do not realise that they are visualising what would mean the destruction of civilisation and are putting forward a thought that should find place only in wicked minds.

Yea, more, there are many of the finest human hearts which are craving for a break from all the complexities and mechanisms of to-day, and for a return, in almost every part and aspect of human life, to the eternal simplicities; good men and women who are grown weary of what is called " law " and are seeking for the prophets; men and women who would have shelter from the noise and rush of modern life, that they might hear diviner voices than the motor horn and the steam whistle, and quieter speech than that of the market-place. This is not a matter merely of

locomotion ; nor does one imagine that the visible and outward conditions of modern life can be materially altered as by a wizard's wand. The return to the simplicities is the walk of the mind and heart and soul. It is the return from the artificial to the natural, in thought and word and deed. It is the weaning of the heart from the material to the spiritual values.

There never was in the world a voice so insistent upon the peerless value of the individual soul as His who said, " Consider the lilies, how they grow : they toil not, neither do they spin. And yet I say unto you that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these," and, again, " What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul ? "

Science is, of course, only one form of knowledge of the human mind. And of nearly every kind of knowledge the same story has, I think, to be told. There are watchmen on the towers of thought who have no telescope with them. And there are diviners who do not work with rods. And of their discoveries in the domain of thought and of the systems of ideas which they have created, a common criticism is, as it is of science, that there is no finality in them. This, however, should not

be a matter of adverse criticism, far less of carping complaint, because all the greatest and best things in the world have no finality in them. Finality is of dead, not of living, things. The last word of the tenderest, fullest love is never uttered. Yearning ceases only with the heart-beat stopped.

There are, in the world to-day, many accounting themselves wise and prudent, who are sceptical about Education, holding that it is too dear in every way. They point to its fruit in such things as Indian unrest, and in the fact the loudest voices in the world to-day are those of men whose fellowship with learning has been the shortest. They live on such feeble sayings as, "A little learning is a dangerous thing," and, "Where ignorance is bliss 'tis folly to be wise." These ideas are not only one-sided, they are lop-sided, and are, in many respects, quite untrue. They are the poetic expression of the slogan, "Safety First," which maxim is invaluable in Fleet Street and Michigan Avenue, but is not only unnecessary, but eminently undesirable, on a way that leads to a heaven worth reaching. Its neglect, it is true, may land you in heaven before your time, but its strict observance in pursuit of truth and the things that are eternally beautiful would clog the feet

of your soul and shackle the hands of your spirit at every stage. Every great good has to be purchased at a price; it is the law inexorable in every department of life. Education has its price that has to be paid, and should be paid gladly, and heroically paid, whether it take the form of elevating the masses, or of leading the heathen out of their darkness, or of giving voice to wrong and injustice long muzzled. In the process, the process of the ages, it happens inevitably that one wrong is put in place of another; that a rest which was really stagnation gives place to an unrest which the polite dislike; that those newly awakened out of sleep see men as trees walking; that the extremists shriek when their tongues are unloosed; that the world does not roll on its way in an even, stolid, stupid progression in a straight line, but is pushed, now to one side and now the other, by the trifling little things called cataclysms in the affairs of men. These things are so, and must be so, and are probably divinely so. Men who fear the light, from whatever quarter it comes, are merely living in a cherished darkness. You do no damage to the sun by pulling down your blinds at midday. You do not make truth less true or knowledge less enlightening by refusing to be agitated and troubled by them.

You do not get the exhilaration of the mountain top by sneaking round the base. Truth and knowledge are not to be wryly faced like the visits of censorious, interfering aunts, but to be welcomed with Browning's "cheer" of the Unseen; they are to be followed with eager feet without questioning as to the length to which they are to take you, much in the same, trustful, humble spirit in which the first disciples responded to Christ's "Follow me," and left their nets, their means of livelihood, to become what they probably did not understand—"fishers of men."

And here again the words and thought of Christ come uppermost. The eternal life He described as a form of knowledge, the knowledge of God and Jesus Christ whom He sent. And it is one of the greatest utterances ever made—"The truth shall make you free"—free in that service which alone has no bonds of worldliness, timidity, bad conscience, backward glances and vain regrets, with no Keats-like fear that the great songs which the singers are not spared to sing will never be sung in the world—the freedom which enabled Christ to say of His work in the world that it was finished when His disciples thought it was hardly well begun.

It is not, I have said, on the ground of their

want of finality, that the deliverances of Science and Knowledge should be suspected. But there are reasons for religious men not worshipping at their shrines. For one thing, they work in material values, and, for the most part, in visible, tangible things. For another, their methods are, for the most part, the methods of analysis and dissection. For yet another, there is little song, music, or poetry about them. Emphasis should not be, I think, unduly laid upon their limitations and failures. It is true that science, no more than "storied urn or animated bust," can "back to its mansion call the living breath." But that may be one of its "magnificent failures"; for death has healed many whom the world could not heal, and has come, more often than the majority realise, not as the "tall subaltern" with the forbidding, yet irresistible eye, calling for the salute, but as the white angel of sleep touching fevered brows and tormented spirits. Yet, it is the deliverance of the wisest and best that the world without a Spirit, Eternal and Immortal, not only in it but above it, would be a sorry place for all who are conscious of something within them, popularly called the Soul, and that if Love is not at the back of the ultimate reach of science and human knowledge, their struggles and

strivings are utterly vain and of no practical value for the good and peace of mankind. Even such heights as they have attained to are too giddy and chilly and rarefied for any human heart that is a heart to rest in. William Canton has it well in his little poem, "Heights and Depths," when he describes the Climber envied by the dalesmen in his "heights and rose-lit pinnacles which placed him nigh the evening star." But—

> "Upon the peaks they found him dead,
> And now we wonder if he sighed
> For our low grass beneath his head,
> For our rude huts, before he died."

The human mind must have the light to which it strains. But the human heart must also have some comfort of clothing in this world of alternating Summers and Winters. Men and women can no more fall in love with gyrostats or the philosophy of Kant or the decimal system than they can with the equator. And I am not persuaded that I am less wise or truly enlightened than the botanist, that—

> "I sometimes think that never blows so red
> The Rose as where some buried Cæsar bled;
> That every hyacinth the garden bears
> Dropt in her lap from some once lovely head";

or that I have less kindness and understanding than the ornithologist when I find beauty in

the beak of the cross-bill, twisted in heroic endeavour to pluck the nails from the Cross, or the redbreast spattered with the blood of Golgotha, or that I hear in the skylark a spirit, an "ethereal minstrel," and the mourning and the call of Phæton's friend Cygnos in the swan-song; or that the eyes of my mind are blinder than those of the horticulturist when I see the outstretched arms of the dying Daphne in the laurel; or that, if I hear the "music of the spheres," the astronomer has much to teach me regarding them that makes them fairer or more wonderful; or that I should see life more clearly and see it "whole" had I the eye of the glow-worm with its five hundred lenses; or that I like the cheerful notes of the cuckoo better that I know its knavish way of stealing nests and entering forcibly into the labour of others, smaller than itself; or that the violet smells less sweet to me than it does to him who calls it by the name *Viola odorata*; or that I should have cared for my fellow-man more had I remembered, in my dealings with him, that he, like myself, was two-thirds water; or that I should find it more difficult to believe in the "persistence of the Ego" if I felt myself daily on my seven years' process of complete change; or that I merely showed an

unbecoming levity if I sang in the presence of the melancholy anatomist; or that I am quite wrong in thinking that "Nature's High Priest" with his "flower in the crannied wall" has probed to secrets as deep as any the naturalist has plumbed, and has left the flowers still blooming. But, be that as it may, when the human spirit grows wearied in its assaults upon the adamantine curtains, and the "invulnerable nothings"; when the human soul craves for something which it can rest upon as ultimate amid all the changes of truth and knowledge, and finds its grasp loosened almost as soon as it has taken hold; when the fierce, frothy fulminations of the leaders on the tubs, leaders pushed from behind by an ignorance profounder than their own, have ceased to reach the middle ear or agitate at all the tympanum; when the voices of the prophets come laden with strangely diverse and even contradictory messages; when Ruskin's gospel of art in the so-called commonplace is manifesting itself on railway hoardings advertising the delights of "glorious Devon," the quiet salubrity of Blackpool, and the atmospheric amenities of Timbuctoo; when women weep and even, under a tyranny more despotic than Mussolini's, dare to die for their Adonais, dead in the person of the film actor;

when the talk of the philosophers has become low mumbling or a distant whining to which busy men give no more heed than they do to the unintelligible sighing of the wind or the empty cooing of the bird ; when the shams and hypocrisies of much that is declared from the pedestal of the politician come uppermost, and are swallowed by an open-mouthed public as the quintessence of wisdom and sagacity ; when the bubbles of those who toy with the problems of life and death are pricked ; when the novelists teach only some partial, and that the least beautiful, aspect of human nature, or teach nothing at all ; when the colours of the painters begin to fade, and the Old Masters seem frightfully old, and the voice of the singer has the querulous, tremulous note of senility in it ; when things that simple men count sacred are become the playthings of the intellectual jugglers and gymnasts, and the literary buffoons ; and when all our April hopes of entry into an ampler life of mind and heart seem to drop to our feet like Autumn leaves, there looms up to the mind's eye a small picture, with a deliverance mightily big, a little picture painted hundreds of years ago, whose canvas of inches the dust of ages has not dimmed, or the ravages of iconoclasts destroyed—a little picture, which, first

painted for the edification of squabbling fishermen, has haunted the eyes of the ages—" He sat down, and called the Twelve, and saith unto them, If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all. And He took a child, and set him in the midst of them: and when He had taken him in His arms, He said unto them, Whosoever shall receive one of such children in My name, receiveth Me; and whosoever shall receive Me, receiveth not Me, but Him that sent Me."

VI

THE QUEST OF THE BEAUTIFUL

THERE is, of course, no standard of beauty, and as surely as in the prosaic matter of diet, "one man's food is another's poison" in the domain of the æsthetic. In many directions, we have reason to fear and be dissatisfied with the individual taste, especially when it is set up as the rule and guide for others. A man may wax eloquent in his passion for venison, and be vociferous in his praise of a minor poet or a fifth-rate philosopher, but, to say nothing of good taste and good manners, he has no right to force his eloquence down the throats of others. So, in the matter of the beautiful, we should, no doubt, respect the ideas of our neighbours, but refuse to do to them as they would do to us in thought and feeling. There are faces even in Leonardo da Vinci's "Last Supper," which, some feel, would not make "good digestion wait on appetite." If traditional portraiture is to be relied upon, some of the saints had no prepossessing appearance; and some, who have led our hearts captive, as they came to us through the printed page, have the appearance of unkempt highwaymen when we see them face to face. Thomas Carlyle may have been a great philosopher

and historian, but if we are to believe the delightful gossip of that old snob, Mallock, he must have had gloves which alone should have disqualified him to be the author of *Sartor Resartus*. If it be the case that "the camera cannot lie," its plates do not seem to produce anything very attractive in the photography of ghosts and departed spirits: so that one would be, on the whole, thankful, for the sake of the ghosts and departed spirits, if they were proved to be "fakes." And there remains unsolved, perhaps insoluble, the question how far the physical and how far the spiritual enters into the creation of what is beautiful; how much of it is produced by what the eye sees and by what the heart feels and by what the imagination pictures. Perhaps these factors are indissolubly related, so that they cannot, by any analytical or dissecting process, be estimated as to their relative values in the created whole. The eye cannot say to the ear that it has no need of it. Many things, perhaps in themselves, individually, not admirable, are essential in every living organism, be it the body or the mind. There is a wealth of truth in the old, prosaic saying that "it takes a lot of people to make a world." But what we cannot fail to see is that there are perfections in the physical

world which make little appeal to the emotions of the heart, nymphs and fairies carved with the wonder of the "Grecian chisel," who are so lacking in the expression of intelligence as to leave us in the presence of a cold statue. Perhaps it is well that this should be so, lest one type of perfection, like one good custom, should "corrupt the world." On the other hand, most of us have seen, not once but many times, a beautiful soul in a miserable body. True it is that a physical deformity commonly enough produces a twisted outlook and a suspicious attitude. But that is not so wonderful as the fact that many walk the path of life with gracefulness of bearing on club feet or on crutches, that many go high in spiritual elevation with hunchbacks, and that many see the most beautiful things with blind eyes. He had perhaps an insight which might almost be described as weird who tells how, when a mere boy, he had an abounding sympathy for the idiot twin-daughters of his tutor, who, to use his own words, were "remarkably plain in person, unhealthy, deaf, scrofulous, disfigured by the small-pox, with glimmering eyes red, like the eyes of ferrets, and scarcely half open." Yet this pariah boy was drawn to these pariah children. They exchanged kisses when they met, and, to use

again his own words, " My wish had always been to beg them, if they really were idiots, not to mind it, since I should not like them the less on that account." This may savour somewhat of the ultra-Realism of modern literature, but it is taken from the writing of one to whom high place among the classics has never been and, I think, never can be denied.

But while definitions that define and are anything like all-embracing are impossible, and processes of analysis make few illuminating revelations in the matter of the Beautiful, yet it behoves men and women who speak of it to have for themselves, if not for others, some picture clear to their mind's eye of what it is. Here is the picture which commends itself most to my mind and heart. He—(what matter his name, or whether he be in the body, if his love was his life, and even the rough-shod tread softly over the plain, dark slab of " The Unknown Warrior," or whether he ever had or wished to have access to the select company of the aristocracy of intellect, so be it he had entrance to the Temple of the Spirit of Christ, from which only the snobs of thought and feeling, not the unshriven of the priests, nor even those who are not unspotted of the world, are excluded)—gets near,

it seems to me, to the eternities of thought and feeling when he dedicates his volume in these words, " Not without misgiving, for you are always more gracious as a giver than as a receiver, I, for whom the harvesting at its nearer coming has little menace, venture to offer to you this little basket of Autumn fruit —to you, though you love me not, who, by your radiant beauty, which surely the hand of God, never the artifice of man, fashioned, your star-like eyes with their lashes, straighter than church spires, pointing to the skies and to all that is fair in human nature, your limbs fleet and graceful as sculptor ever gave to Mercury, your shining hair like unbroken waves kissed by the sun, your unaffected simplicity of mind and heart, your etherealness as far removed from prudery as pole from pole, your hauntingness like a living ' Lucy Gray,' your mysterious silences when you seem so far away in fastnesses of fact or fancy of which I know only that I am a stranger to you there, and your alluring illusiveness— have brought me, with threads stronger than the chains of Prometheus on Caucasus, to a religion which is for me magnetic, dynamic, and perennially young—to you, who still lead my spirit, though you know it not, on a road, on which sorrow and suffering do not meet me

only in freakish or monkish garb, and roses are still roses for all their thorns, and love does not shiver in the coldest places—to you, who, just with your smile of kindness, encourage me, when I am lonely and tired, foot-sore and wondering if the struggle much availeth, to cherish the hope or, it may be, the dream of a Somewhere where the skeins are less tangled than they are here, and of a Sometime of reward, if reward be needed, of patience and humility, when you will be just as you are, with all your boyish ways, and I shall be somehow so transfigured by an elixir, not of the alchemist, but of God, that, pausing awhile on your bright way, you will play with me as child with child at some heavenly game, of which you will not weary so soon as when I, with eye less dim and heart less scarred, first watched you play at the age of eight and I at four times eight, in your garden paradise of innocence, from which, though I know the wasp, adding injury to the insolence of its intrusion, once stung you to tears, and suspect that, in your almost frigid honesty and ascetic modesty of heart, you find the honey of your ardent admirers too sweet, you have never wandered or been lured afar."

That is a picture of the Beautiful and of

religion, before which I, at any rate, can, and do, sit down again and again, finding each time some new feature and suggestion in its details, as I do in the windows of Douglas Strachan, that greatest of living artists in glass, most humble-minded of men, with transparency of soul as lustrous as his amethysts, and riches of mind, heart and imagination as brilliant and as shimmering as his reds and blues. To the visionless in the matter of beauty and religion, whose plaint is for ever of the exaggerations of imagination, the quietly thunderous reply of the great artist to the critic who said of his picture that he had never seen a sunset like it, " No, but don't you wish you had ? " is sufficient answer. There are glories and wonders as marvellous and, I venture to say, as real, revealed to the eye of the spirit as there are to those who use the telescope and the microscope. And it is to be remembered that all the fairest and greatest things have come to this world clothed in the robe of a personality. No small part of the power and persuasiveness of Christianity is surely the fact that it came to this world in the sublime and divine person of Christ. Had it come to the world merely as a system of Ethics, the sublimest possible, it would never have had the sway which it

exercises over the minds and hearts of men. Abstractions do not win souls, and systems have no irresistible drawing-power in the heart of humanity. No disciple will ever go as far as he might go if he have merely the finger-posts of instructions to lure him on : he requires to have the "call"—a good and significant word that has suffered much by misuse and its frequency on the lips of the hypocritical and the insincere. The command which is readily and happily followed is not the order, "Go," but the one so often given by Christ, "Follow Me." The figures of the mythologies, the women who were half angels of beauty and half fish, not only leave one cold—they are creepy and uncanny. The angels, in the vision of those who see them, are not flying, whirling, disembodied spirits, but fashioned in some form which makes their ministries a blessing, and not a terror, to frail mortals, with the touch, not of the cold skeleton, but of the warmth of the human hand. There is to-day much called spiritual whose spirituality consists in being without any substance, just as there is that which is called poetry because it has neither rhyme nor reason. We can, as it were, actually visualise the angel face of Stephen as he spoke to his bloodthirsty audience, and the face of Mary

as she sat at the feet of Jesus has clear outline for the fond imagination.

And it is, at any rate for me, beyond all doubt that simplicity, humility, "ethereal-ness," "mysterious silences," "alluring illusiveness," childlikeness, even playfulness, the sound of the tear, the touch of suffering, the hope of a "Somewhere" and a "Sometime" beyond the grave, are not only of the essence of the Beautiful in general, but in particular and pre-eminently of the essence of a religion which is "magnetic, dynamic, and perennially young," and I am persuaded that no religion can ever be a great religion which is not "magnetic, dynamic, and perennially young." These pictures of religion open up vistas to the human mind which almost appal in their reach. They call men, at any rate, to the contemplation of adventures more adventurous than those of the Crusaders, to romances much more romantic than those of the novelists, to flights of the spirit beyond the farthest star, to the "dare-all or lose-all" of the Christian's losing life to gain it.

These aspects of the beautiful in religion, I rehearse, not for the spectacular reason that they are new; indeed, I don't know whether they are new or not. And I know that zeal for a new and striking presentation of Christi-

anity has often led writers into extravagances and to purely fantastic images, and to make pictures of Christ such as the gospels do not support. Much of the modern writings on this subject is rich in imagination, but has little historical basis. Many novelists, having made a great name for themselves as story-tellers, have yielded to the temptation to introduce Christ as the central figure into some of their fiction, but commonly present Him as coming, not from Nazareth, but from the vicinity of the Isle of Man, or from the Bohemia of Chelsea, or from some quiet bungalow in Kent. The fact that it was "boosted" in America (I saw it occupy the whole of the booksellers' windows in several of the cities there) is not the only reason for being critical of Giovanni Papini's *Story of Christ*; for I never forget that some of the most beautiful and suggestive studies of the Christian Ethic and character have come across the water from the pen of Professor Peabody. What I feel about Papini's work is that it has, especially in the manger scene and in the much belauded Crucifixion scene, too much of the realism which takes men's minds, not to the skies, but to the ashpit and the shambles. That should not, however, shut one's eyes to the fact that many of the

modern writers have given sidelights of a beautiful kind on the personality of Christ, and taken us into by-paths with Him which are sweet with roses. Just about the most delightful single sermon I have ever read, I picked up for sixpence from a bookseller's counter, entitled *Ecce Puer*, and written by a learned and distinguished friend of mine, a Professor of Divinity—presenting Christ as being, from first to last, a boy, with the boy's outlook, the boy's feelings, and even the boy's speech. These and such as these are all written in the spirit of reverence, and volumes written in that spirit are good for the public eye.

Christianity has been painted on larger canvases in the well-nigh innumerable Lives of Christ and the treatises of the learned. Sometimes in these one does not think the wit was so far off the mark, who said 'that nobody doubted the existence of the Deity till the Boyle Lecturers undertook to prove it, and that nobody was worried about the foundations of Holy Writ till Gladstone wrote his *Impregnable Rock*.' It is the practice with many, thinking themselves clever, to denounce the creeds and confessions as wooden, bloodless creations, which rather conceal than reveal a personality and a spirit. But the

same may be said of much of the elaborate religious writings of to-day and of yesterday, and of the philosophies that have a bearing on religion. The most readable of the Gifford Lectures are, I think, those of William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience.* I often think that Lord Balfour is himself a better "Foundation of Belief" than the others he has laid in his writings, and I fancy his lectures have no more profound understanding in the average man's mind than they had when delivered in the ears of the good ladies who were sublimely unaware of any sharp, overt or internecine war between the *a priori* and the *a posteriori. The Golden Bough* is not only the greatest work in the world on Comparative Religion—it is one of the most wonderful examples of the reach and the extent of the quest of the human mind. But no ordinary head can carry even a portion of its contents as a ready-reckoner, any more than the most capacious pocket can accommodate its twelve large volumes.

Then we have the writings on religion of the scientists, some wholly admirable, and others disfigured by a spirit of patronage. These bear such titles as: *A Not Impossible Religion, A Religion that will Wear, The Religion of the Twentieth Century, The Faith of a Reasonable*

Man, etc. Such titles themselves show that no small part of these writings is the effort to make natural what has been regarded as supernatural, to bring the mysteries from the clouds to " the man in the street "—yea, even to make the round man comfortable in the square hole. There are " Lay Sermons " which seem to carry an authority and command an audience, not so much on their own intrinsic merit, as by reason of the fact that there is popular suspicion of " the clerical " and an equally popular and unreasonable appreciation of " the lay." We here suffer from the tyranny of great names. If Spiritism were to be judged by the great men who have subscribed their illustrious names to it, its phenomena would be as well established as anything could be in this world. But the fact that, " not the Bible tells us so," but that the professors and savants tell us so, is no guarantee of the validity of opinions in the spiritual world. The very genius of a man in his own department may lead him far astray when he passes into some region of thought which is not his speciality. The extreme delicacy and beauty of his measuring instruments may tempt him to apply them to things which cannot ever be measured by them. And many of the writings of this class are

vitiated by the fact that the writers, not being rooted and grounded in the codices of Biblical Criticism, choose what of the Gospel record suits their purpose and leave out what does not.

Of making many books there is no end, and the nett result of them seems to be that Christ Himself escapes away from their pages, much as He did from His friends who would have kept Him with them, and from His enemies who would have taken Him before His time, while He lived in this world. And that fact, simple as it is, is striking evidence of His "alluring illusiveness." And where are we to find Him again when He escapes away from the printed pages?—a question which itself rouses men's minds and hearts to the spirit of the quest, the eager seeking, the high aspiring, the straining and the stressing, the agitation of the great yearning, the soundings of the spirit high and deep, and the pilgrim walk. And to that eager question of men's hearts and souls, the prophets, saints and martyrs—yes, and the beautiful characters who have their walk on the common, dusty roads of this noisy world and the conversation of their souls in heaven—give answer, that if only men will come out of the tombs and caves of their selfishness, in which Christ only seems to torment those already tormented, and out

of the gilded synagogues of their avarice, cherished ignorance and vanity, in which He is an unwelcome intruder, He will company with them, in no ghostly or fantastic fashion, but " magnetic, dynamic, and perennially young," as they enter, " by the gate Beautiful," into the Temple, fairer and more lasting than any made with hands, of love and goodness, into the sanctuary of tears, sorrow and suffering, and into the garden of childlikeness, humility, simplicity, naturalness and devotion, where the " hardy annuals " are as clean as they are hardy, and their more delicate sisters bow their heads and drop their crowns and take their adieux with the whisper—and the whisper and the " still, small voice " make the roaring and the bluster of the Winter wind but " sound and fury " signifying very little—that, while they may tarry no longer in the withering fondlings of the tenderest fingers, they will come again at the mystic call of Spring, whether we are here to welcome them or not, indeed, whether there be human eye to greet them at all, as fresh and as fair as they have ever been.